

the persistence of poverty to the private appropriation of the rent of land. A short account of the spread of Henry George's teaching follows with mention of its influence on legislation in various countries including Denmark, New Zealand and Australia. The medium for this able statement was well chosen, since *Terza Forza* is the official organ of the political party "Democracy National" and it was the secretary of the party, Signor Patricolo, who invited the article, with more to follow on the same subject. Another noteworthy press contribution by Dr. Pulvirenti appears in the Rome Liberal journal, *L'Uomo Qualunque* (any man whatever). Here the whole regimen of bureaucracy and controls is picked to pieces and the absurdity of such slogans as "produce more, consume less," "export more, import less," is exposed.

The Bulletin, No. 11, of the Ethos Institute devotes a column to "Georgeist" material and announces that the new term for the study of *Progress and Poverty* opened on December 2. It is the resumption of the classes Dr. Pulvirenti has already conducted with considerable success, using the "lesson sheets" and other equipment of the Henry George School translated into Italian.

Tenant Farmers in Lower Burma

The well-known authority, S. E. Harvey, in his book, *British Rule in Burma, 1824—1942*, makes this comment on landlord institutions:—

Rice farms are small, at most 30 to 60 acres, but a single landlord often owns several in different localities up to a total of five hundred or even a thousand acres. They are let at a rack-rent on a one-year lease. The tenant does not stay long enough to learn the individual nature of his fields, he has no incentive to improve them as he can never be certain that the lease will be renewed, and fertilizers seldom yield their full effect in the first year; the land is over-worked, under-nourished and deteriorates. Even the landlord does not stay; English rule led to moderate accumulations of capital, but banking and investment facilities did not spread to the interior, and land was about the only thing there was for a man to put his money into—a financial commissioner once said in jest that the delta fields reminded him of securities on the Stock Exchange, they changed hands so often.

The Burman held his own as a skilful and hard-working cultivator. But although Indian cultivators were not common—they predominated only on the poorer soils—their standard of living was so low that they could always afford to outbid the Burman, and the rise in rents was partly due to their competition. It is fatuous to blame tenants for thriftlessness when rents are so high that even a good cultivator has so little left after paying his rent that he can barely maintain his family at subsistence level until the next harvest, and if his plough bullock dies in an epidemic he hasn't a penny to replace it, he is literally helpless and must take whatever terms are offered, however hard.

It was not for lack of information that nothing was done; we always had plenty of officers who were specialists in land revenue with enough information at their fingertips to settle the matter three times over. It was lack of will . . .

Royalties for Sheiks and Sultans

According to a report in the *Observer* (London Sunday paper) the Sheik of Kuwait will personally receive £50,000,000 in oil revenues from British and American oil interests. As the population of Kuwait numbers some 165,000 Arabs, that works out at about £305 per head per annum.

Considering the standard of living to which they are, and have been, accustomed for countless centuries, this would indeed be a princely income—if they got it. But the money goes to the Sheik, either because he is the land-owner, or because only he is in a position to bargain with the oil interests.

The oil has been lying under the desert sands for millions of years. The Sheik certainly never put it there, and he would never have known of its existence if geologists and prospectors had not been sent by capitalists from the West to look for it. Or if he had known it was there, he could have done nothing with it. It would have had no more value to him than the sand which covered it.

The world cannot get on without oil, and as long as private property in the land is recognised, toll has to be paid to the land-owner before the oil can be exploited.

In the same way, the Sultan of the tiny protected Malay State of Brunei, with a population of only 40,000, is reported (according to O. M. Green in the *Observer*, January 27), to be receiving £8,000,000 a year in royalties and taxes on oil. If this were shared by his subjects, they would receive £200 annually, man, woman and child.

Oil certainly means vast wealth for *some* but it does not raise the standard of living of the ordinary inhabitants of the countries from which it comes. The peasants and workers there are as poor and half-starved as they have been for countless centuries, while their exploiters who already had their palaces, their gardens and their art, have now in addition, Rolls Royces, their electric light, their refrigerators—and perhaps their private planes—and all the luxuries the West can supply.

The poverty and misery of the masses in the East can never be alleviated by international charity, or by grandiose schemes of capital development; their condition can only be improved by securing to them their equal right to the use of land and their enjoyment in common of the rent attaching to it.

STOP PRESS

Victory in Western Australia

An air-letter, dated February 6, received from Mr. Halkyard, of the Henry George Foundation, Australia, reports: "Bunbury, a sea-port town 100 miles south of Perth, W.A. (population 10,000), has adopted site-value rating by resolution of the Council.

This important municipal town is adjacent to Collie Coalfield and is the centre of an agricultural area. This decision follows the victory at Albany, another sea-port town on the W.A. south coast.

"The Council of Midland Junction has assisted a survey of its rating in relation to housing and business premises. This has been published as an illustrated report and a re-valuation will be made."

Thus Midland Junction may be the next place to adopt the reform.